(b) the details of the *modus operandi* of the scandal;

(c) the quantity and value of wheat diverted to traders, the Monetary loss suffered by FCI and the estimated profits made by the traders by selling this wheat at exorbitant prices; and

(d) the action taken against the concerned officials?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) to (d) Food Corporation of India (FCI) sold a total quantity of 29.14 lakh MT of wheat in the open market at prefixed rates in Haryana during October, 1993 to April, 1997. With a view to ensuring that the wheat sold in the open market was made available to the local people, the stocks were released to traders after obtaining an affidavit from them to the effect that they would not sell the stock outside the revenue districts to which they belonged. These traders sold the stocks to other parties within the same revenue districts. The buyers of wheat through this second sale, who were technically not bound to the affidavit given by original buyers, sold the stocks of wheat to parties outside the States.

The officers of the FCI were suspected to be involved in the above diversion of wheat to the open market and the matter was referred to Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) who have completed their investigation in all the six cases registered in this behalf. CBI have already filed chargesheet in the appropriate Court of Law in two of the cases and closed one case. In the remaining three as recommended by CBI, disciplinary action has been initiated. However, in one case no action could be taken against an officer who had already been dismissed. The FCI did not incur any financial losses on this account since wheat under the Open Market Sale Scheme (Domestic) was sold at rates fixed by the Government from time to time.

Central teams to enquire starvation deaths

†2251. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether Government had sent any Central teams to Rajasthan and Orissa after obtaining information of deaths due to starvation and malnutrition in the States;

(b) if so, when these teams were sent alongwith the names of members of the teams; and

(c) the findings thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) To check the alleged starvation deaths Central teams were sent to Rajasthan and Orissa.

(b) Shri B.B. Patnaik, Commercial Manager (CM), Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC), Head Quarter New Delhi & Dr. Ashok Kumar, Deputy Director, Storage and Research, Department of Food and Public Distribution visited Rajasthan on 22nd & 23rd October, 2002.

Shri B.B. Patnaik, CM, CWC, HQ, New Delhi, Shri K.M. Vaghela, Deputy Director, Department of Food & Public Distribution, New Delhi, Shri P.K. Mahapatra, Senior Regional Manager, and Shri Y.K. Das, Regional Manager, Food Corporation of India, Bhubaneswar, Orissa visited Orissa on 1st September, 2002.

(c) The team that visited Rajasthan has reported that the deaths in Suvans and Gangapur villages of Baran district could have been due to starvation coupled with malnutrition and lack of timely medical attention. The Team observed wide-spread hardship, huger and malnutrition in remote areas due, mainly, to the failure of the Public Distribution System and the absence of employment opportunities.

As per the finding of the team that visited Orissa, the alleged deaths in Gajakupalli village of Muniguda Block in Rayagada District and Kuladera village o Keonjhar District did not appear to be due to starvation. Adequate quantity of foodgrains of fair average quality(FAQ) was found available at the fair price shops. However, it was noticed that certain poor families in utter distress were borrowing money from

village money lenders by mortgaging their ration cards. The ration cards in most cases were with incomplete details.

BPL Families in Himachal Pradesh

2252. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the families living below poverty line have been identified in Himachal Pradesh for coverage under the Centrally sponsored schemes like Antodaya Anna Yojana etc.;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any study has been conducted to find out their purchasing powers; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government in this behalf?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The State Government of Himachal Pradesh has identified 79,000 families under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana.

(c) No Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Additional storage capacity in Orissa

2253. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any request has been received from Orissa for approval of construction of additional storage capacity under the 7 year guarantee scheme of FCI;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) by when a decision is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU):